



# Dar es Salaam

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## Includes »

Dar es Salaam.....	44
Around Dar es Salaam...	62
Pugu Hills.....	62
Offshore Islands.....	63
Northern Beaches.....	44
Southern Beaches.....	65

## Best of Nature

- » Pugu Hills (p62)
- » Bongoyo and Mbudya islands (p63)
- » South Beach sea turtles (p347)
- » Going on a bird walk (p46)

## Best of Culture

- » Cultural Tourism Programs (p54)
- » Central Dar es Salaam around Jamhuri St (p46)
- » Meeting local craftspeople and artisans (p57)
- » Barazani Night at Alliance Française (p58)

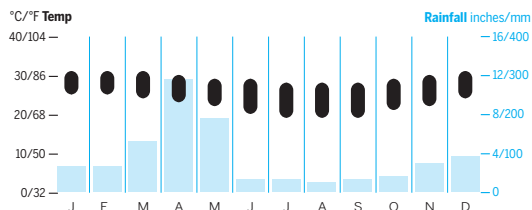
## Why Go?

With a population of over three million and East Africa's second-largest port, Dar es Salaam is Tanzania's major centre. Yet under its veneer of urban bustle, the city remains a down-to-earth place, with a picturesque seaport, a mixture of African, Arabic and Indian influences and close ties to its Swahili roots. In addition to a handful of sights, there are excellent craft markets, shops and restaurants, and the streets are full of colour and activity. Along the waterfront, colonial-era buildings jostle for space with sleek, modern highrises, massive ocean liners chug into the harbour and peacocks stroll across the manicured State House grounds. Nearby are enticing beaches and islands.

Many travellers bypass 'Dar' (as it is locally known) completely, by flying directly into Kilimanjaro International Airport (between Arusha and Moshi). Yet the city merits a visit in its own right as Tanzania's political and economic hub, and the cultural heart of the country.

## When to Go

### Dar es Salaam



**Jul** The June through August cool season is the most comfortable time to visit Dar es Salaam.

**Sep** Watch the Goat Races ([www.goatrases.com](http://www.goatrases.com)), and support local charities.

**Year-round** Cool or hot, raining or not, Dar is an enjoyable stop year-round.

## History

Until the mid-19th century, what is now Dar es Salaam was just one of many small fishing villages along the East African coast. In the 1860s Sultan Seyyid Majid of Zanzibar decided to develop the area's inland harbour into a port and trading centre, and named the site Dar es Salaam ('Haven of Peace'). No sooner had development of the harbour begun, however, than the sultan died and the town again sank into anonymity, overshadowed by Bagamoyo, an important dhow port to the north. It wasn't until the 1880s that Dar es Salaam assumed new significance, first as a way-station for Christian missionaries making their way from Zanzibar to the interior, and then as a seat for the German colonial government, which viewed Dar es Salaam's protected harbour as a better alternative for steamships than the dhow port in Bagamoyo. In 1891 the colonial administration was moved from Bagamoyo to Dar es Salaam. Since then the city has remained Tanzania's undisputed political and economic capital, even though the legislature and official seat of government were transferred to Dodoma in 1973.

## 👁 Sights & Activities

Sampling Dar's vibrant markets and craft shops is one of the city's highlights; see Shopping (p57).

### National Museum

MUSEUM

(Map p50; ☎022-211 7508; [www.houseofculture.or.tz](http://www.houseofculture.or.tz); Shaaban Robert St; adult/student Tsh6500/2600; ☀9.30am-6pm) The National Museum houses the famous fossil discoveries of *zinjanthropus* (nutcracker man) from Oldupai (Olduvai) Gorge (although only a copy is available for general viewing), plus displays on many other topics, including the Shirazi civilisation of Kilwa, the Zanzibar slave trade, and the German and British colonial periods. For vintage auto aficionados, there's a small special collection, including the Rolls Royce used first by the British colonial government and later by Julius Nyerere. The museum is currently undergoing extensive renovations, with a cultural centre and other additions planned.

### Village Museum

MUSEUM

(off Map p48; ☎022-270 0437; [www.museum.or.tz](http://www.museum.or.tz); cnr New Bagamoyo Rd & Makaburi St; adult/student Tsh6500/2600; ☀9.30am-6pm) The centrepiece of this open-air museum is a collec-



## Dar es Salaam Highlights

- 1 Stroll through the **city centre** (p53) taking in the beat on the street
- 2 Shop for **crafts** (p57) at one of the city's many craft venues
- 3 Get to know the area around Dar es Salaam, starting with the **beaches** (p65)
- 4 Snorkel and relax on **Mbudya** or **Bongoyo** islands (p63)
- 5 Immerse yourself in life local style – everything from enjoying the weekend scene at **Coco Beach** (p57) to attending a church service at **St Joseph's Cathedral** (p53) or **Azania Front Lutheran Church** (p53)
- 6 Do some **cultural tourism** (p54) to see another side of Dar es Salaam life
- 7 Visit the **fish market** (p47) or a **museum** (p45)

tion of authentically constructed dwellings illustrating traditional life in various parts of Tanzania. There are sometimes traditional music and dance performances held on afternoons.